in the matter since last two decades, *it* has been universally cosidered that scientifically deep geological disposal in granitic formation is one of the safest methods to isolate radioactivity from the human biosphere for extremely long periods of time.

(d) DAE is not aware of any study conducted by Rajasthan University after the 1974 Pokharan test. The 1974 Pokharan underground test was completely contained from a radioactivity point of view and there was no surface contamination even at the test sites after the explosion. So the question of a rise in cancer cases in Pokharan after 1974 does not arise.

State level Directorate for protection from radiation

† 502. SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to set up State-level Directorate for the protection from radiation under the non-military atomic programme;

(b) if so, whether the States, which are running atomic programme, would be free to formulate security rules independently;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal to set up State-level Directorates to monitor radiation safety, as the present-national system is effective.

(c) to (d) Do not arise.

Amendment to the Consumer Protection Act

503. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that comprehensive amendments are being brought forward to the Consumer Protection Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether any substantial steps are being taken to protect the interests of the consumers and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when the new legislation is likely to be brought forward in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD) (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) and (c) The proposals fur amendment to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 mainly relate to speedier disposal of cases in the Consumer Courts giving more powers to the Consumer fora to better protet the interest of *Consumers,* constitution of benches of National/ State Commissions, setting up District Consumer Protection Council, etc.

(d) The proposals are being finalized in consultation with Ministry of Law to introduce the Amendment Bill in Parliament as soon as possible.

Increase in the Prices of Essential Commodities

504. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of essential commodities in the country have been increasing for the last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons therefore; and

(d) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF